

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Evangelism Conf. kicks off January 18

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

[JAN 19 2009]

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A roster of top Baptist speakers from a variety of mission specialties is slated for the 2009 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference on January 18-20 at First Church, Clinton.

"I'm excited about the lineup of speakers. These men have something to say, based on their lives and their ministries," said Don Lum, director of evangelism for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). "They should appeal to a wide cross-section of Mississippi Baptists."

The conference will begin at 6 p.m. on January 18 with praise and worship followed by keynote speaker Rickey Blackaby, president of Blackaby Ministries International in Jonesboro, Ga. The Sanctuary Choir of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, will provide praise and worship.

The conference will resume at 9 a.m. on January 19 with praise and worship led by Mike Harland, director of worship at LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville and former minister of music at Broadmoor Church, Madison, and Crossgates Church, Brandon.

Speakers will include Blackaby and Pascagoula native Michael Catt, pastor of Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga. The Sanctuary Choir of First Church, Clinton, will offer praise and worship.

Breakout sessions will begin at 1:30 p.m. on January 19. Session leaders include:

- Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research in Nashville and LifeWay missiologist in residence. The title of his session is Comeback Churches.
- Frank Cox, senior pastor of 4,600-member North Metro Church in Atlanta. The title of his session is Evangelistic Invitations.
- Forrest Sheffield, senior pastor of Harrisburg Church, Tupelo. The title of his session is Revival Preparation.

The conference will reconvene at 2:45 p.m. on January 19 to hear Stetzer and Don Wilton, a former Mississippi Baptist church staffer and currently senior pastor of First Church in Spartanburg, S.C.



Acts 1:8
Jesus to the World
STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

January 18-19, 2009

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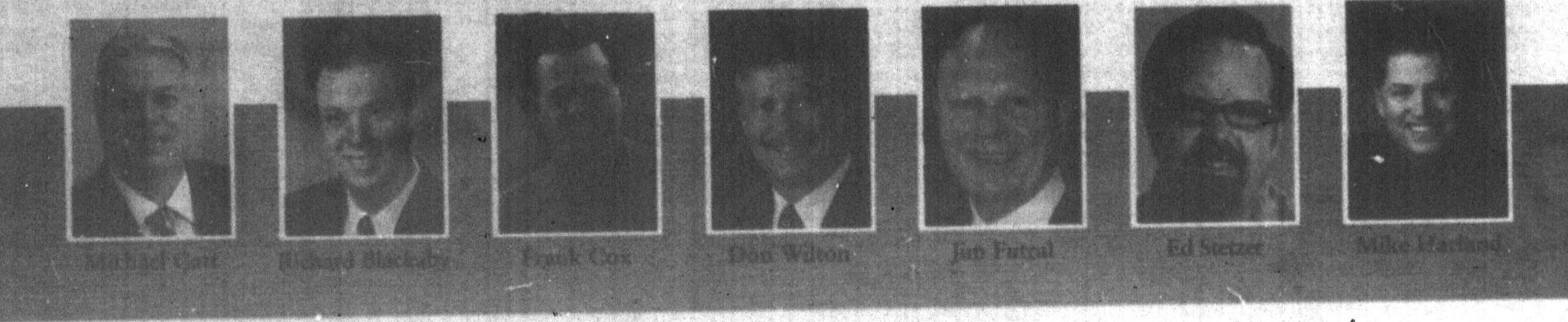
Department, at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3373 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 373. E-mail: gshows@mbcb.org.

For more information on the COMBE meeting, contact COMBE president Wayne Hudson at Complete In Christ Ministries, P.O. Box 1543, Kosciusko, MS 39090. Telephone: (662) 289-6228. E-mail: wtj4@bellsouth.net

For more information on the bivocational ministers meeting, contact Dale Holloway in the Pastor/Leadership Development Department, MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 845-2107. E-mail: bivoldr@aol.com.

For more information on the State Evangelism Conference, contact Lum in the Evangelism Department, MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3278 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 278. E-mail: jellis@mbcb.org.

The Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference is supported annually by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.





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The real homosexual rights movement

U.S. President-elect Barack Obama's choice of conservative evangelical (and Southern Baptist pastor) Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at his inauguration next Tuesday has inflamed a lot of raw nerves and exposed some people for who they really are.

Warren, a graduate of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth and pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Ca., apparently committed the ultimate offense against homosexuals when he campaigned for Proposition 8, the California initiative on last fall's ballot that successfully outlawed same sex marriage in that state.

While promoting Prop. 8, Warren said he is against the redefinition of marriage demanded by militant homosexual rights groups. For that unforgivable act, the president's invitation to Warren to pray at the inauguration was seen by homosexual rights groups who supported Obama as the consummate betrayal.

"Let me get right to the point," said Joe Solomonese, president of the Human Rights Coalition, one of the most radical national groups agitating for special rights for practitioners of a variety of sexual perversities, in an open letter to Obama. "Your invitation to Reverend Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at your inauguration is a genuine blow to LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) Americans. Our loss in California over the passage of Proposition 8 which stripped loving, committed same-sex couples of their given legal right to

marry is the greatest loss our community has faced in 40 years. And by inviting Rick Warren to your inauguration, you have tarnished the view that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans have a place at your table."

Solomonese was joined by Kathryn Kolbert, president of People for the American Way, who sniffed, "It is a grave disappointment to learn that pastor Rick Warren will give the invocation at the inauguration of Barack Obama." Her group is promoting a petition to Obama that reads in part, "Rev. Warren was a poor choice to lead the invocation due to his long history of hateful, divisive rhetoric on important cultural and civil rights issues."

In calling on the news media to investigate Warren's actions, Neil Giuliano, president of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) posited, "Media outlets have a responsibility to scrutinize Rick Warren's history of using his powerful platform to advance anti-gay rhetoric and prevent loving couples from being able to take care of and be responsible for one another."

Openly homosexual U.S. Congressman Barney Frank of Massachusetts, who once professed surprise that a homosexual prostitution ring was being run out of his Washington, D.C. residence, also weighed in.

"I am very disappointed by President-elect Barack Obama's decision to honor Reverend Rick Warren with a prominent role in his inauguration. Religious leaders obviously have every right to speak out in opposition to anti-discrimination measures, even in the degrading terms that Rev. Warren has used with regard to same-sex marriage. But that does not confer

upon them the right to a place of honor in the inauguration ceremony of a president whose stated commitment to LGBT rights won him the strong support of the great majority of those who support that cause."

To his credit, Obama has stood his ground on Warren's invitation. To his discredit, he issued a hasty announcement that Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson of New Hampshire, who lives in an admittedly non-celibate relationship with a male lover that has split the Episcopal Church in this country and rocked the Anglican Communion internationally, will offer the invocation at the opening event of the Inaugural Week activities, We are One, to be held at the Lincoln Memorial two days prior to the inauguration.

So, this is what the homosexual rights movement means when they demand "tolerance." Anyone who opposes their radical restructuring of American society must come around to their point of view for the sake of tolerance, but that tolerance will go unrequited when the shoe is on the other foot. We must accept them, but they can exclude us. We must welcome their lifestyle, but they remain free to condemn ours. We must respect them, while they demean us.

Today, it's Rick Warren in their sights. Tomorrow...

2008 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

January 18-19, 2008

Fox Baptist Church • Clinton, Mississippi

Jesus in World

GUEST OPINION:



Pray for our new president

By Richard Land, president
Ethics and Religious Liberty Comm.
Nashville

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

Shortly after Election Day, I released an open letter to U.S. President-elect Barack Obama in which I told the new president that I would pray for him, his family, and his administration, noting that I would pray that God would bless him with "safety, health and all spiritual blessings."

What prompted my promise to pray for the president-elect? The Scriptures are clear. While as a Christian I am a citizen of both the earthly and spiritual realms, I am under the authority of the civil magistrate (Luke 20:25). I am compelled to be a good citizen of the state "for conscience sake" (Romans 13:1-7).

In the Apostle Paul's first letter to Timothy, Paul wrote that the first priority in our fulfillment of our civic duties ("first of all," 1 Timothy 2:1) is to pray. We are to remember everyone, including all those in authority over us, with "petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings."

Paul sought to underscore the fact that proper conduct within the body of Christ includes praying for and respecting those in power as a primary spiritual civic duty. Paul was well aware that during His earthly ministry, Jesus had promoted respect for the state, for His Kingdom was not primarily of this world. Jesus did not confront the Roman state directly, but taught respect for the civil magistrate (Matthew 22:21).

It is likely that, as with every person who has occupied the White House in our lifetimes, we will disagree with at least some of President Obama's positions on social and moral matters. If we contend with his decisions with bitterness and an unflattering spirit, we run the high risk of bringing disonor on the name of Christ.

We must be mindful of our

Gospel witness. We can, and must, disagree without being disrespectful.

We can pray:

- for the safety of President Obama and his family, that God would foil the attempts of those who wish to harm him, that his family would be protected and blessed, that they would always trust God and know His Scriptures;

- that our president and other national leaders would look to God for His wisdom in dealing with the difficult issues of the day;

- that Christ would be glorified by the decisions made in the White House, the Congress, and the courts, and that good would triumph over evil in every policy decision;

- for policies that encourage moral behavior and attitudes, that prescribe justice for those

who do wrong, that do not fetter our right to speak freely, and that recognize the foundational strength and importance of biblical marriage;

- that we would be willing to make the necessary hard choices and become a part of the solution to the troublesome problems we face as a nation and, that as churches and Christians, we would be particularly sensitive to those who are struggling and defenseless;

- that we would put our faith in God, not in man's plans or government programs.

If we are not faithful in going to our knees in intercession for our new president and other national leaders, we can be assured that evil will be more likely to prevail. We hope that you will join us in praying for our new president, his family, and for those who advise him.

We have developed a prayer guide that can be downloaded at iLiveValues.com/prayer and distributed as you desire. We are hopeful your church will set aside time on Sunday, Jan. 18, or sometime during the week of President-elect Obama's inauguration, to lift up to our Heavenly Father our new president and all those in earthly authority.

Our prayers can change our country — they will change us.

TLW carries on with abstinence message

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The True Love Waits (TLW) abstinence-until-marriage movement has recorded numerous milestones since its launch by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The first True Love Waits national celebration took place in July 1994, when more than 210,000 covenant cards signed by teens were displayed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. More than 14 years later, an estimated 2.5 to three million youth have signed commitment cards pledging sexual purity until their wedding day — and that number continues to grow worldwide.

Hundreds of thousands of commitment cards from youth throughout the world have been displayed at several events, including the 2004 Olympics in Athens. More than 100 organizations have adopted the use of True Love Waits to promote sexual abstinence.

Despite the progress, much work remains to be done, True Love Waits cofounder Jimmy Hester said of the youth-based international campaign that utilizes biblical principles and positive peer pressure to encourage those who make a commitment to refrain from premarital sex and to challenge their peers to do the same.

Hester noted that the United States "still has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy and births in the industrialized world, resulting in severe economic and social costs, not to mention the personal pain early sexual activity places upon teenagers and their families."

Each year over the life of True Love Waits, the ministry's leadership has provided themes and direction for churches to help students live their lives in purity. For 2009, LifeWay has released a gender-appropriate flipbook, Complete: A Life of Purity, that can be used by youth leaders as a Bible study tool to engage students in conversation about the moral challenges they face.

Later this year, a new study, Pure Parenting: Teaching Your Teen Why True Love Waits, will be available for churches to use to support parents in their role as primary spiritual developers of their students.

True Love Waits also is expanding its reach in other parts of the world such as Africa, where honoring a commitment to remain abstinent until marriage is literally a matter of life and death. In Uganda, True Love Waits has been a catalyst for bringing people together around the abstinence message in schools, youth groups, communities and other places.

In the years that followed TLW's introduction in Uganda, the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate, which in parts of the country was above 30%, dropped to the

current rate of 6.7%. Some leaders there say that this turnaround has literally saved a generation.

In February 2009, a LifeWay team will spend two weeks in the Philippines to work with the True Love Waits movement there and evaluate possible ways to expand in that country as well.

This spring, adult and student leaders and shapers in the sexual abstinence movement will consider the future direction of True Love Waits for coming generations. While the message of True Love Waits remains the same, youth leaders and parents are constantly challenged in the most effective ways to communicate with students and encourage them to maintain their commitment to abstinence until marriage.

"It is important for churches to realize that confronting sexual issues in today's world requires more than a one-time event or emphasis. Students need ongoing education and encouragement if we hope to continue to make progress in our culture.

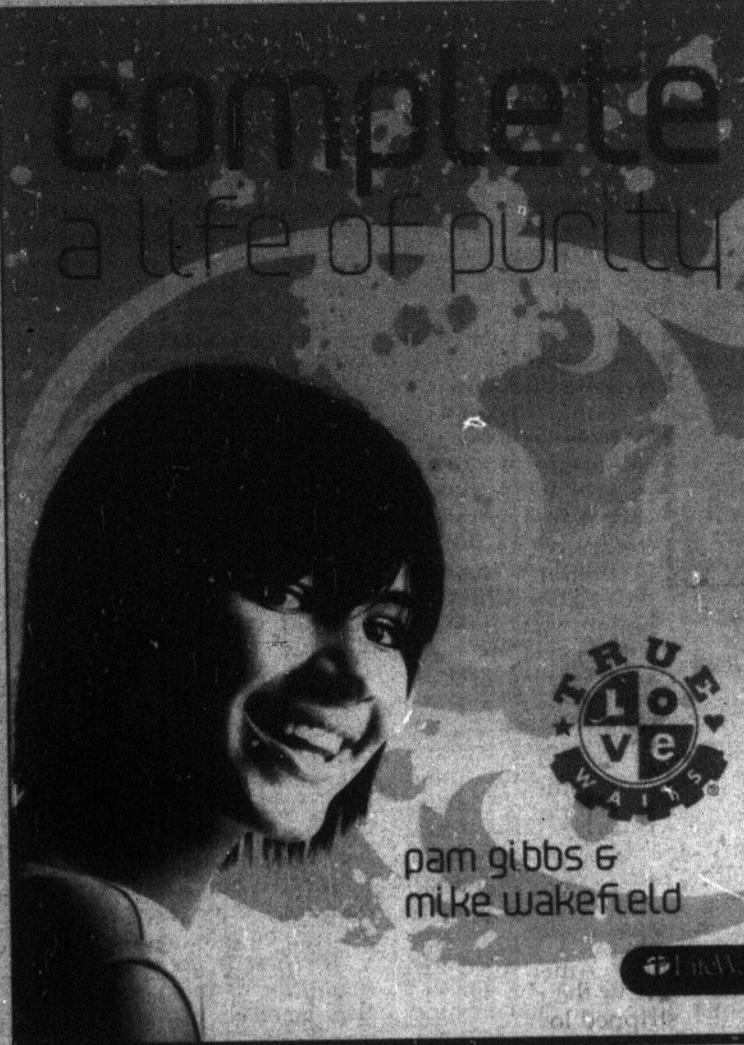
"Although times and cultures change, God's plan for sexual purity remains the same," Hester said. "True Love Waits continues to be an important tool to guide students in living lives of biblical purity."

In 2004, the Heritage Foundation released a study indicating that abstinence programs such as True Love Waits dramatically reduce the rate of out-of-wedlock births. The study, which tracked the effects of virginity pledges six years later, found that young women who take a virginity pledge are at least 40% less likely to have a child out of wedlock and 12 times more likely to be virgins when they marry, compared to young women who do not make such a pledge.

The Heritage Foundation findings were consistent with a 2001 study by The American Journal of Sociology that reported teenagers who pledge to remain sexually abstinent until marriage are 34% less likely to have sex than those who do not pledge.

Researchers conducting the study noted the delay effect is "substantial and almost impossible to erase." The pledge works, the study suggests, because it creates an "identity movement" or "moral community" that provides peer support for the teen.

More recently, a June 11, 2008, article in USA Today headlined, Teen survey shows virginity pledges can work, noted, "Virginity pledges do deter some teens from having sex, according to a study by the RAND Corp. that surveyed teen virgins over three years to see whether they stayed that way. Of 1,517 adolescents ages 12 to 17 in 2001 when the research began, teenagers who vowed to



NOW AVAILABLE — By addressing purity regarding the mind, the heart, submission to God, and waiting for His best, this five-session True Love Waits resource from LifeWay Christian Resources uses a unique flipbook approach — the guys' study is on one side of the book and the girls' study is on the other side. The resource also contains a helpful leader's guide to start conversations and stimulate discussion as you pursue small group study. (BP art)

remain virgins until they were married were less likely to be sexually active than others who didn't make a pledge."

These and other studies challenge the generally negative assessment of abstinence programs reached by some researchers. While studies about teens' sexual behavior sometimes have contradictory findings and conclusions, the true measure of success is changed lives.

True Love Waits often receives correspondence such as this letter from Caroline in Colorado Springs: "I was part of the [Washington] D.C. '94 event, and first made a commitment to abstinence until marriage..."

"Although it was not easy... I can say it was definitely worth the wait and we have no baggage in our marriage because of past partners or troubling diseases."

Looking back

10 YEARS AGO

At least 1.5 billion people in more than 220 countries have seen the "Jesus Film" in theaters, on television, via video, and by watching 16mm reels projected onto portable screens, sheets, or walls. The International Mission Board is the largest single group using the film other than the project's own workers.

20 YEARS AGO

Edgar Lee Wright, pastor of New Sight Church, Brookhaven, is honored for 20 years of service to the church. Woman's Missionary Union president Nell Strube presents Wright and his wife Marguerite with a quilt made by the members of the WMU.

30 YEARS AGO

W.A. Criswell, pastor, First Church, Dallas, and R.G. Lee, pastor, Bellevue Church, Memphis, will be the two principal visiting inspirational speakers for the annual State Evangelistic Conference in Clarksdale Feb. 9–11.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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No. 3



YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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LSEZZ HNJ NG VMKU
LNGL: TMU NT VJ AJZN-
JPJ GMW WSEW N EQ SJ,
VJ LSEZZ HNJ NG VMKU
LNGL.

BMSG JNRSW: WFJGWV-
TMKU

Clue: : H = D

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Eight: Forty Six

WAY TO GO, MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS!

The opening line of *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens is most appropriate for Mississippi Baptists at the close of 2008 and the beginning of 2009: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." While things are tough, prices are up, jobs are down, and the economy is shaky, Mississippi Baptists have continued to give faithfully to support the Kingdom work of our Lord Jesus. *Way to go, Mississippi Baptists!*

What does that phrase, "Way to go," mean? Well, you know the sense and the feeling of it. It is used to interpret a person's actions or achievements, and it simply means that you have done a good job. When it comes to your giving, you have done a great job — thumbs up, high fives, and extreme appreciation to you and our churches across the state.

The Cooperative Program is the lifeline allowing each of us to connect to thousands of ministries and evangelistic endeavors across our state and around the world. Whether it is a child in need, a church in crisis, a soul lost in the darkness, or a saint needing direction, your faithful giving is pressing on toward meeting those needs. The reason I say "Way to go Mississippi Baptists!" is because we met our budget goal and then beyond our budget \$824,855 was given to the Challenge portion of the



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

budget. The regular budget that day-by-day funds schools, seminaries, North American and International missions, church plants, and childcare needs was \$34,263,763. Once that amount was reached, the money went to the Challenge portion of the budget. It is not just overage, but it is dollars that make immediate and great impact. The 2008 Challenge portion was divided for use in the following manner. The 50% Christian Education portion will go to our three colleges divided equally; 25% will go directly to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions; and 25% will be used in evangelistic effort in the rebuilding of the Mississippi Coast.

Thank you for your incredible support. How is it that this has taken place in such a dire financial situation? I would point to three elements that seem to be at work among us.

The first is the positive participation of our churches and their members to touch a world for Christ. While many churches across the country and some

in our state have reduced their giving to the Cooperative Program, others have remained strong and some have increased their support. You are terrific, and you deserve commendation. As people give at the local level, it is interesting to notice that God's people give out of a sense of commitment. The Lord has directed in this, and it is not just looking for a better deal on the latest commodity.

The second element is prudent planning. Looking back over the last several years, although none of us knew what was ahead we took steps that would be thoughtful related to our stewardship. Let me briefly explain. When Katrina hit, we had already put in place a budget that would show an increase and growth, but in wisdom the Budget Committee scrapped that plan and brought a budget to Convention messengers for their approval that was flat line — the same as the year before. After Katrina and her disastrous wake, we gradually increased the budget about one percent per year, which allowed us not to be overwhelmed.

The third element is the providential provisions of God. I am convinced that God blesses those who bless His work. How He goes about doing that is

business, but if you will keep your eyes of faith open, you will see Him doing amazing things for good in the worst of times.

As we move into 2009, certainly the challenges will be before us. What does the year hold? No guru on the planet knows — but God does, so we look to Him confident that the best of our ability Mississippi Baptists will continue to keep the Lord, His work, and a world in need on our hearts and in our giving. Regardless of what is ahead, we will face the future in faith and with a commitment to do the Lord's will. *Way to go, Mississippi Baptists!*

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Tebow's mom: 'miracle child' is humble champion

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — With four older children, Pam Tebow, whose father was an Army colonel, was used to setting boundaries, issuing orders, and choosing her battles by the time "Timmy" was born in 1987.

No worries, though. Tim Tebow, the 21-year-old University of Florida quarterback and the first sophomore to win the Heisman Trophy, has been "obedient and teachable and kind," according to his mom.

The proud mom and other members of the Tebow clan were in Miami's Dolphin Stadium a few weeks ago to watch the Gators win their second national championship in three years. Tebow threw two touchdown passes and was named the game's offensive most valuable player.

"It came as a great, pleasant surprise that when we told him to do things like go clean the garage, that he actually got up and did it," Pam Tebow told the Florida Baptist Witness.

Calling Tim, the 6-3, 240-pound left-hander, "still teachable," Pam Tebow said she and other family members are not shy about sharing things with Tim — a member of First Church, Jacksonville — in spite of his celebrity status.

"He wants to hear and we appreciate that, because that's what a disciple is, a learner, and he's still willing to learn," she said. "Learn about being a better football player, learn about what Scripture says about different subjects, and learn as a student at the university."

Detailing the story about how Tim almost didn't make it into this world, Tebow revealed the origins of what

she said are his "rare qualities" and how he has become known as being "unusually kind" in spite of his competitive nature on the football field.

Miracle child

Living in the Philippines as missionaries, Pam and her husband Bob, who now heads the Bob Tebow Evangelistic Association, had been told the baby she was carrying needed to be aborted because she had complications due to medication used for an amoeba infection.

"They didn't recommend; they didn't really give me a choice," Pam Tebow said. "That was the only option they gave me."

At the same time doctors were telling her to have an abortion, Bob Tebow had been out preaching in the field. "He was so burdened about abortions taking place in America," Tebow recalled.

"Lord, if you give us another son, then we'll raise him to be a preacher," Pam Tebow recalls her husband praying. With four little children and their parents' heads bowed, the Tebow family prayed for a miracle.

"We all prayed for Timmy by name," Pam Tebow said. "It was a very serious prayer. We prayed that God would give us a Timothy."

"It was just amazing that God spared him, but we knew God has His hand on his life," she said. "We all, through all these years, have told Timmy that."

Tebow said she and her husband have told all of their children they are special and God has a "special" plan for their lives. Tim's situation, however, was more intense because of the less predictable outcome.

"I guess it was a little more dramatic because we saw the miracle of Timmy's birth and we continually reminded him, God has a special plan for your life," Pam Tebow said. "It was sweet. It was really a great beginning because you know when something is hard to come by, you value it so much."

"We value all our children, but all of our children value Timmy because they'd all had a part in praying for him. He is a well-loved kid."

It's likely that the security fostered by a loving and caring family — along with a hearty dose of God-given talent — allowed the young man to flourish as a leader both on the football field and on the mission field.

"Whether it's fighting for the national championship or fighting to see the Gospel brought to a country where people have never heard the name of Christ, I think that's what probably has made him a good leader, that he's passionate and that he's not afraid to stand alone," his mom said.

Pam Tebow said she's thought about Tim in the context of being the youngest child and how typically younger children follow their elders, but she thinks the fact that he was raised very securely has helped him to develop into a strong leader.



TRAIN UP A CHILD — Tim Tebow, the youngest of five children (seen here as a boy with his mother), was taught biblical lessons at a young age — but "children still have choices to make," his mother says today. Tim Tebow recently led the University of Florida football team to claim their second national championship in three years. (BP photo courtesy of the Tebow family)

Education, leadership

In the Tebow home, all five children were homeschooled by Pam Tebow, who graduated with a degree in journalism from the University of Florida. The family left the Philippines and moved to Jacksonville in 1990 when Tim was three.

Bob Tebow, a graduate of the University of Florida and Western Seminary in Portland, Or., expanded his ministry to the Philippines which now includes short-term and summer mission trips, an orphanage, a boat ministry, and supervising a staff of 45 Filipino national evangelists.

Tim played football for Nease High School in Ponte Vedra, but did not actually attend classes there. Because of a law the Florida Legislature passed in the 1990s allowing homeschoolers to play sports, various versions of "Tim Tebow" bills have been proposed in other states to allow homeschooled students to participate in public school sports.

Remaining neutral about choices families make for their own children's schooling, Pam Tebow said she believes homeschooling provided her children security in the sense that they were not constantly evaluated against other children academically.

"You're not in school where people are going to put you down, either because you don't read as fast as somebody else or you made a 'C' on your paper, but they made an 'A.' That didn't happen in our home, so that breeds security... people aren't negative about anything you do. You are given the opportunities to grow at the rate God has intended for you to grow at in certain areas."

Secure people use leadership to influence other people "for cause," Pam Tebow said, noting Tim takes his role as leader seriously. "He's not peer dependent. He's not depending on his buddies and what they are doing. He's able to stand alone."

"I think that's another quality for a leader, that you have to stand alone, in your belief system, you have to be ready to take a stand and not be as concerned if the person next to you believes a little differently."

"That doesn't mean you're not kind and tolerant to them, but it means you firmly believe in what you're doing and the cause that you're fighting for."

Citing Tim's strong faith in Jesus Christ, Pam Tebow said she and her husband have discussed their son's leadership ability and concluded he reminds them of the late Homer Lindsay Jr., who co-pastored First Church, Jacksonville, Fl., where many of the family are still members.

"You don't have to be always the loudest person to be a leader," Pam Tebow said.

Missions

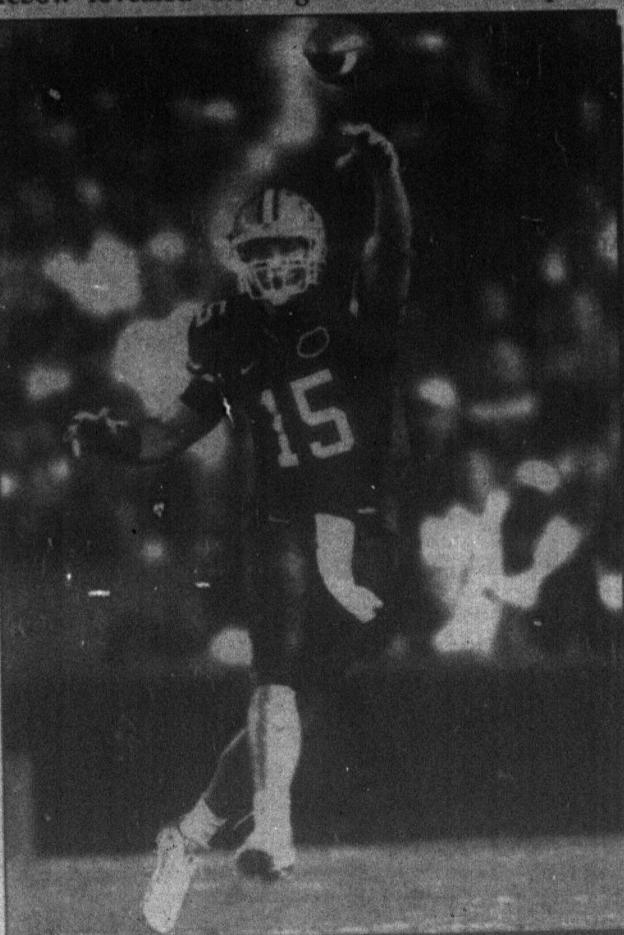
Tim has played football in sold-out stadiums and he's pulled in scores of awards for his athleticism which began at age five, but beyond that he's softened the hearts of thousands who have stood to hear him share the simple message of salvation — or strained at a prison gate to slap him some skin while he was visiting with inmates.

In the Philippines, Tim once spoke to a group of 10,000 students in Digos, Mindanao, during a summer missions trip. His mom said he has gone on the trips annually since he turned 15 — something all of the Tebow children looked forward to while growing up.

"I think being able to articulate the Gospel clearly and his ability to speak in front of people and to people was really a by-product of those summer mission trips," she said.

"He knows all those little boys wearing number 15 jerseys are watching him," Pam Tebow said. "We've talked with all of our children that God would give them each platforms to use for Him and you're always influencing somebody. You're either influencing them for good or not so good and so it's your choice."

She doesn't hesitate to remind her son to whom much is given, much is required. "I'm not saying he's perfect," Tebow emphasized graciously. "I never want to insinuate that — none of us are. That's why we need Christ, but we're grateful that he's been able to maintain his convictions and his strength."



CHRISTIAN, CHAMPION — Tim Tebow made history in 2007 as the only sophomore ever to win the Heisman Trophy, emblematic of the best college football player in the country. Despite his notoriety as the quarterback of the current collegiate national champion football team, Tebow makes time for charity, church, and mission trips. (BP photo courtesy of the University of Florida)

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Moak's Creek baby dedication



2. Stronghope Church



3. Crystal Springs Church



4. Hillcrest Church youth



1. Moak's Creek Church, Lincoln County, held a baby dedication Nov. 27. Shown are pastor Micheal Alexander; Ashlyn Kate Hall, daughter of Stuart and Sarah Hall; Raylee Claire Price, daughter of Wade and Briana Price; and Andrew Maddox Kreuger, son of Patrick Kreuger and Lori Brown.

2. Stronghope Church, Wesson, held its annual children's Christmas party Dec. 6. The children and youth delivered over 40 fruit baskets around the community. Shown are the participants.

3. The Mission Friends and Children in Action from Crystal Springs Church, Tylertown, collected and delivered canned foods for the Walthall County Food Pantry as a Christmas mission project. Shown are the participants.

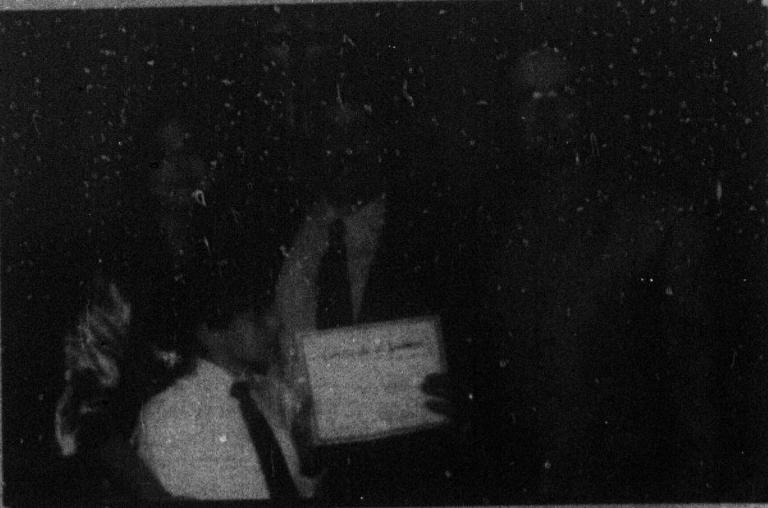
4. Approximately 50 youth from Hillcrest Church, New Albany, visited the North Delta Association center Oct. 11 and cleaned, sorted food and clothing, and did other work. Shown are the participants.

5. Tangipahoa Church, Summit, licensed Jamie Matthews to the ministry Dec. 28. Shown are Zack, Kristi, and Jamie Matthews and pastor Mike Morris.

6. The Christian Women's Job Corp, Philadelphia, rewarded four ladies their certificates of completion for their participation in the 16-week Jobs for Life program. The study deals with the whole person to help restore and motivate them toward a Christian approach to work and life. Shown, from left, are Betty High, Christi Alsen, Sandra Howington, and Patricia Thornton.

7. Gracewood Church, Southaven, burned a mortgage note in the first worship service of 2009, retiring the debt on their property in 12 months. Shown are participants in the note burning.

8. The children's choir of Bovina Church, Vicksburg, presented the Christmas program The Next Noel. Shown are the participants.



5. Matthews licensing



6. CWJC, Philadelphia



7. Note burning, Gracewood Church



8. Bovina Church

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

House Tops.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

January 15, 2009

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



our church or association who could serve one or more weeks (Monday-Friday) during the summer at Camp Garaywa, please contact

Erica Harms at 800-748-1651, ext. 315, or E-mail at charms@mbcb.org.

NURSES NEEDED

AT GARAYWA
CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER

We couldn't make it through the summer without nurses to help care for our hundreds of campers! If you know of nurses (RN, LPN, or retired nurses) in

you church or association who could serve one or more weeks (Monday-Friday) during the summer at Camp Garaywa, please contact

Erica Harms at 800-748-1651, ext. 315, or E-mail at charms@mbcb.org.

Missions Now Weekend "REAL"

A coed missions weekender
for 7th-12th grade students
and their leaders.

April 3-5, 2009

Morrison Heights BC, Clinton
(located at the old campus on
Morrison Drive)

Cost \$25

Preregistration required
Registration deadline: March 9

For more info, contact the
Mississippi wMu at 601-292-3316,
1-800-748-1651 or kredditt@mbcb.org

Children's Ministry Day in Mississippi

2009 Theme:
Loving Hearts



Mississippi churches, you
can join thousands of
churches from coast to
coast in a celebration of
children doing ministry!

Visit: www.childrensmissions.com
to learn more and share your
Children's Ministry Day (CMD) stories.

For help planning your CMD, con-
tact Tammy Anderson or Robin Keels
in the MS wMu at 1-800-748-1651.

2009 STATE PRAYER SUMMIT

Morrison Heights BC, Clinton

Mark your calendars now to join the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board women's visionary team, all wMu leaders, women on mission, women's evangelism, women's enrichment ministry, men's ministry, RA leaders and all missions leaders of Area 5 for Personal Renewal.

Special Guests

Elaine Helms

Kevin Meador



"Enter-Mission"

Saturday, January 17

9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

State Prayer Summit

Prayerwalk, Worship Celebration, Prayer Sessions
and Worship Prayer Concert

+

"Pray-over Clinton"

9:00 a.m.	Begins Morrison Heights BC
10:15 a.m.	Return to church
10:30	Worship Celebration
11:45	Lunch (\$5 preregistration form at www.mbc.org)
12:30 p.m.	Prayer Sessions one for women & one for men
1:30	Prayer Concert
2:30	Adjourn

For more info, contact Kathy Burns:
601-292-3316, 1-800-748-1651 or kburns@mbcb.org

Church Facilities & Furnishings WORKSHOP

March 17, 2009

8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Parkway Baptist Church
802 North Frontage Road, Clinton

For: pastors, staff members, building
committees, long-range planning
committees, business administrators and
maintenance/property personnel.

CONFERENCES INCLUDE:

- LifeWay Church Architecture
- Construction Issues (Small Church)
- Construction Issues (Large Church)
- Renovation/Redesign Issues
- Codes, Regulation, Inspections, Asbestos, Etc.
- Construction Method: Partnering
- Keeping the Church Informed
- Construction Method: Architect/Contractor
- Tile/Small Construction
- Building Program Budget, Costs, Etc.
- Banks and Lending Institutions

- Bonds Program
- Stewardship Campaigns: Challenge to Build
- Financing Your Church Construction Project
- Pastor/Staff Leadership in Building Campaign
- Multipurpose Facilities
- Building Construction Committees: Selection & Training
- Public Relations and Communication
- Construction Method: Design Build
- Insurance and Building Projects
- Legal Issues in Church Building and Property
- Technology and Lighting Issues
- Acoustics/Sound Issues
- Multipurpose Facility Flooring: Which is Best for Your Church?
- Volunteers in Construction Missions Project
- Master Planning
- Crime Prevention for Houses of Worship
- Construction Method: Self-Performance
- Pre-Engineered Metal Buildings
- Education Space (Youth, Adult, Children)
- Preschool Children Space
- Worship Space
- 17 Design Trends in Recreation and Sports Facilities
- Interior Design
- Relocation and Community in Transition/Relocation Issues
- Crime Avoidance Approaches for Individual Pastors
- Construction Method: Draftsman

For more information, contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at 601-292-2305, 1-800-748-1651
or kmcdonnell@mbcb.org or kgordon@mbcb.org

SINGLE ✿ Conference

Monday, February 16
Iuka Baptist Church, Iuka

- Experiencing Forgiveness: Glenn Shows, Singles' Consultation Family Ministry for Mississippi Baptists
- Picking up the Pieces: Eileen Wright, Singles' Consultation Family Ministry for Audubon Baptists

Thursday, February 18
Glade Baptist Church, Laurel

- Single Parenting: Cecile Stanback Monticello, Executive Director for Pregnancy Choices
- Picking up the Pieces: Wayne Hudson, Vandeave, Author of the book, *Many a Tear has to Fall*

Thursday, March 19
FBC, Sumrall

- Five Love Languages for Singles: Glenn Shows, MBCB
- Singleness with a Purpose: Becky Brown, Recording Artist and Author, Richardson

State Senior Adult Evangelism Rally

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Central Baptist Church, Brookhaven, MS

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Registration begins at 6:30 a.m.

Speaker: Dr. Jim Gandy, President of MBCB

Guest Speaker: Dr. Jim Gandy, President of MBCB

Music: Southern Gospel Quartet, "The Four Winds"

Prize drawings: \$1000, \$500, \$250, \$100, \$50

2009 VBS EXPO

FOR ALL PASTORS,
VBS DIRECTORS, AND VBS LEADERS

VBS Materials will be on display and
available to purchase from Lifeway
Christian Resources

February 9, 2009 • 9-11 a.m.
First Baptist Church Lyman
14321 Old Hwy. 49, Gulfport

February 10, 2009 • 9-noon
Liberty Baptist Church
5199 Lakeland Drive
Flowood

February 10, 2009 • 6:30-9 p.m.
Longview Heights Baptist Church
4501 Goodman Road, Olive Branch

For more info:
Angie Boydstun at
aboydstun@mbcb.org or
Lee Ann Boykin at
laboykin@mbcb.org
or call 1-800-748-1651, ext. 292
or 601-292-3292

MISSISSIPPI KIDS' CAMP 2009

Central Hills Baptist Retreat Kosciusko, Miss.

Week 1 - June 22-24, 2009
Week 2 - June 29-July, 2009

FOR KIDS WHO HAVE COMPLETED GRADES 3-6

COST \$150

For registration
information, please
contact MBCB
Conference Office
at (601) 292-3216.



FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCES 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 17
FBC, Leakesville

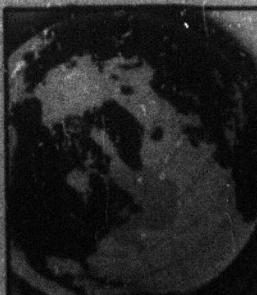
601-649-5710

- 1-2-3 Magic, Christian Parenting by Chris Webb, FBC, Jackson
- Finances in the Family, by Jerry Mixon, Stewardship Director, MBCB

Tuesday, March 3

New Bethel BC, Philadelphia
662-656-2301

- Love Languages of the Family by Glenn Shows, Family Consultant, MBCB
- Finances in the Family by Jerry Mixon, Stewardship Director, MBCB



Jesus TO THE World

STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE
January 18-19, 2009

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
CLINTON, MISSISSIPPI

SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18
Praise and Worship
Richard Blackaby

MIDNIGHT, JANUARY 19
Praise and Worship
Mike Harland
Richard Blackaby
Mike Catt

Break for lunch
Midday, Breakout Sessions
Ed Stetzer "Comeback Churches"
Frank Cox "Evangelistic
Invitations"
Forrest Sheffield "Revival
Preparation"

Praise and Worship
Ed Stetzer
Don Wilton

WEDNESDAY EVENING
Dinner - Anderson Hall, MC*

EDWARD, JANUARY 20
Midday 12:30 a.m. Senior Adult Rally
Morrison Heights Baptist Church
Clinton

For more info: Evangelism Department, 1-800-748-1651, ext. 278

Missionary Moments Prayer Guide

2009 MISSIONARY MOMENTS PRAYER GUIDE



2009 Missionary Moments Prayer Guide

Order your free guide now (while supplies last)
by calling 1-800-748-1651, ext. 347, or 601-292-3347.

Books will be shipped postage paid.
(A STEWARDSHIP AND CP PROMOTION)

FOCUSING ON KINGDOM ESSENTIALS

A conference for congregational leaders seeking spiritual strength and refreshment so that they may serve more effectively in the Kingdom of Christ.

May 30, 2009 Time: 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Temple Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, Mississippi
Don Wilton and T.W. Hunt - Keynote Speakers

Sponsored by Mississippi Baptists

Pray this day for...

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

... in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

II Peter 2:13-14

(1) SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE
SUNDAY (AC Emphasis).

(2) State Evangelism Conference,
FBC Clinton, 8 p.m., Sun.
9 p.m.-19th (WML)

Bivocational/Small Church
Membership Ministers/Ministers'
Wives Luncheon, Morrison
Heights Baptist Church, Clinton,
11:45 a.m.-4 p.m. (WLD)

Pray for South Mountain
Community Church in Milburn,
N.J., a church plant that began
Easter 2006 in a suburb of New
York City. This church ministers to
the middle/upper class of the sub-
urban area. Several Miss. Baptist
churches are helping to support
them. Pray for their continued
efforts to reach a difficult popula-
tion of metro New York.

(1) Senior Adult Evangelism Rally,
Morrison Heights Baptist Church,
Clinton, 8-11:30 a.m. (DFM);
(2) A mission team led by North
Star Church, Sartell, Minn., will be
traveling to a country in the
Pacific Rim, Jan. 26-Feb. 3, to work
with Muslims and tribal people in
the area of evangelism and
church planting. Pray for them
and this challenging ministry.

The Light Church in Baltimore,
Md., is a unique church plant. It
ministers in an area of Baltimore
primarily reaching young profes-
sionals and the Hispanic commu-
nity. Pray that the church can
continue to find unique and creative
ways to minister there. Miss.
Baptist churches are involved in
resourcing, praying and volun-
teering with them.

The Bridge Church in Perry, Ohio,
is a church plant in a suburb of
Cleveland. This church has explod-
ed in the last year increasing its
membership by 51% and baptizing
over 30 believers. Pray for this
church as it grows and makes a
positive impact on their commu-
nity. Miss. Baptists have been a part
of supporting this church plant
and watching it grow.

A member of Petal Harvey
Baptist Church is participating in
a medical/dental mission exper-
ience in Honduras, Jan. 20-26.
Pray for her as she ministers.
Pray that by meeting the physi-
cal needs among the people that
they will be open to the Gospel
presentation presented.

A couple from Loxahoma
Baptist Church, Senatobia, Miss.,
are traveling to a country in
Southeast Asia to work with MKs
at a home school conference,
Jan. 28-Feb. 7. Pray for this couple
as they travel. Pray that they
will be a blessing to the MKs and
their families as they lead and
minister to their needs.

Pray for Donna Reine and her
sons, from FBC, Vicksburg, serving
in Vancouver, Canada. She is
working with a church plant
called Urban Village Church.
Several Miss. Baptist churches are
supporting this church plant with
resources, volunteers and prayer.
Pray for ministry opportunities as
they serve in Vancouver and work
to strengthen this church plant.

Five members of Highland
Baptist Church, Crystal Springs,
will travel to Guatemala to work
alongside IMB personnel in the
area of evangelism, Jan. 29-
Feb. 3. Please pray for the min-
istry opportunities this team will
encounter as they serve.

(1) State Prayer Summit,
Morrison Heights Baptist Church,
Clinton, 9 a.m.-2:45 p.m. (WML);
(2) Pray for a mission team from
Yale Street Baptist Church,
Cleveland, Miss., as they travel
to Mexico Jan. 17-24, and par-
ticipate in a gospel distribution
project called "Operation Go."

A couple from Meadow Grove
Baptist Church, Brandon, Miss.,
will be participating in prayer-
walking and evangelism on
islands in South Asia, Jan. 24-30.
Pray that this couple will be able
to pray on sight with insight for
the lost of these islands.

STATE MINISTRY ASSISTANTS CONFERENCE

MARCH 30-31, 2009
CAMP GARAYWA • CLINTON
MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

"Who knows but you have come to this royal position for such a time as this?"

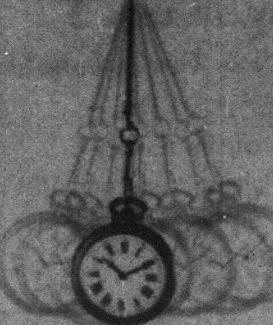
Esther 4:14

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- Kay Arthur's "Lord Teach Me to Pray" Overview - Ann Rials
- Beth Moore's "Believe in God" Overview - Jerebeth Mehler
- Cyndi Wood's "The Frazzled Female" - Sandi Komurke
- "Help! I'm New at This!" - Linda Jenkins
- "Rendering Unto Caesar..." - Sarah Kirby
- "So You are NOT a Size 4" - Laura Marler
- "Paint for the Barn" (Makeup and Skin Care) - Shirley Sisk
- Actual Time of Prayer - Robbie Linley
- Planning for your Retirement - Robin Nichols
- Mississippi Baptist Convention Resource - Anne Martin

SPONSORED BY THE PASTOR/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

"FOR SUCH A TIME
AS THIS"



SPEAKER
ELAINE RHODES



WORSHIP
SUSAN WILSON

BROCHURES WILL BE
MAILED SOON!



Encourage
an MK with a
birthday greeting!

3/1/01
MISS LAURA WINGO
Parents: Floyd & Sylvia
South America

3/6/95
MISS ERIN DEMARS
Parents: Guy & Cindy
West Africa

3/11/00
Miss Emma Grace Roberts
Parents: Marty & Suzanne
Central & Eastern Europe

3/11/93
Miss Hanna C.
Parents: J. & M.
Restricted

3/17/03
Miss Emma Grace Epps
Parents: Aaron & Tiffany
South America

3/24/89
Miss Robyn Kyzer
Parents: Russell & Melinda
Middle America & Caribbean

3/28/03
Miss Emma Worthy
Parents: Charlie & Shannon
Western Europe

3/28/92
Miss Heather Beaman
Parents: Brad & Lenora
Restricted

3/31/93
Miss Grace Holyfield
Parents: Michael & Patsy
Central & Eastern Europe

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: Child's name,
Parent's name, MBCB wMu MK Birthdays, PO Box 530,
Jackson MS 39205

PLEASE NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together;
cards do not have to be sent individually to the wMu.

HOUSE TOPS

Ghana medical centre celebrates golden anniversary

NALERIGU, Ghana (BP and local reports) — George Faile III was just eight years old when he started tagging along as his father treated patients at Ghana's Baptist Medical Centre 50 years ago.

Young Faile saw countless patients with malaria or snake bites, but instead of seeking professional medical help many villagers in Nalerigu visited spirit doctors who treated ailments with herbal remedies, libations, and skin-cutting rituals.

Today, Faile — who serves as medical superintendent of the hospital his father helped start with the International Mission Board (IMB) — has seen things change not only medically but spiritually. People are more willing to seek access to modern medicine.

Through the years medical missionaries have started more than 70 churches and continue to bring news of the true Healer.

That ministry is why Ghanaians turned out to celebrate the hospital's 50th anniversary this fall. Villagers from all over northern Ghana converged for a weeklong celebration, which culminated in a grand outdoor event that drew 3,000 people.

"I have seen Baptist medical facilities all over the world," said IMB executive vice president Clyde Meador, who spoke at the event. "I don't know of another that has served in a more challenging place and yet has made such an impact on the community. I give thanks to God who has made it all possible."

That impact runs deep in an area where there's only one paved road and most people live in mud huts.

Medically, infant mortality rates in northern Ghana continue to decline as mothers receive prenatal and postnatal care. Public health education prevents measles and meningitis epidemics. About 85% per-

cent of tuberculosis patients recover fully, thanks to a secluded village on hospital grounds where patients stay with their families to complete their six-month treatments.

That tuberculosis recovery rate is at least 10% higher than the average for Ghana and higher than nearly every other country in Africa, according to the World Health Organization.

Spiritually, missionaries and medical staff have brought countless people to faith and paved the way for other Christian groups to start working in the area. To continue the medical center's spiritual impact, U.S. churches have made long term commitments to return regularly to areas around the hospital that are still unreached with the Gospel.

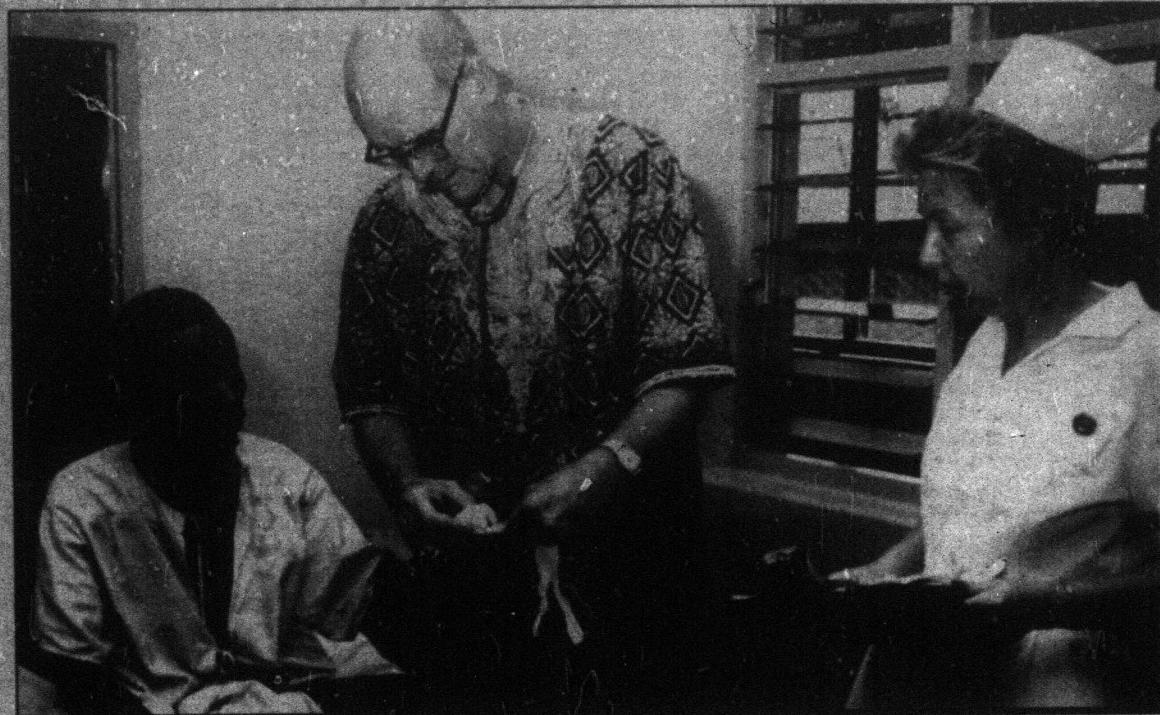
Economically, Nalerigu has flourished. Faile witnessed the arrival of electricity, telephones, cars, and motorcycles. He's watched the town swell from 3,000 to more than 10,000 people, evidence of development he doesn't see in other villages nearby.

Government officials praise the hospital for employing more than 200 Ghanaians.

"This hospital has made a huge contribution to the human resource base of this region," said a Ghana government official who spoke at the anniversary ceremony. "[Baptist Medical Centre] is regarded as a trailblazer that has set the pace for other health care providers in the region."

Public health nurse Florence Wuni has been a staff member for nearly 35 years, but that's not the only connection she has to the hospital. As a child, she received treatment for eye infections. As an adult, she gave birth to five children at the hospital.

She also gave her life to Jesus at a church started by hospital staff. "[The hospital] is a part of all of us," she said. "It has enlightened people to health. It has brought the Word of God. It



has changed so much here."

The staff works under the leadership of the hospital's only two physicians, Faile and Earl Hewitt, a member of First Church, Jackson, and a career medical missionary with the International Mission Board. Together, they see about 2,000 patients per week with ailments from hypertension to typhoid.

Malaria season often fills all 123 beds. IMB pharmacist Jane Paysinger prescribes nearly 80,000 Tylenol tablets each month.

Faile also performs around 1,200 major surgeries every year. In fact, Faile had to miss some of the anniversary festivities to treat a man attacked by a hippopotamus.

Someone is always on call to treat such emergencies. "There has never not been a doctor on duty in 50 years," Faile said.

A handful of current and former missionaries who have helped keep that record intact came back to celebrate

the hospital's anniversary.

Among them was IMB worker Cherry Faile, daughter of the hospital's founder and sister of George Faile. She spent 16 years developing Jesus-centered public health programs in Nalerigu before moving to serve in Niger.

The missionaries pray more doctors will come because George Faile plans to retire soon. The work is not yet finished. That's evident when patients arrive wearing leather fetishes and stone charms to invoke healthy spirits.

As they wait in line, they hear of another Healer. Ghanaian hospital chaplains

and volunteers host devotionals where some people hear about Jesus for the first time. The chaplains, who are from the area, also visit wards to pray with patients and seek opportunities to share the Gospel.

"People don't just come here from far away because they know they will have their needs met," said John Koffi Boateng, who works in indigent patient administration at the hospital. "They come because they know we pray here. They know we have a different kind of love. It's the love of Christ that has changed our lives."

OBITUARY

1. Services were held at Good Hope Church in Marion County Dec. 23 for Donald Riley, age 70. Riley was a pastor in the Marion County area for many years. He is survived by his wife Alma Riley of Columbia; a daughter, Kathy Smith, of Monticello, Ark.; two sons, Donald Riley Jr. of Alabaster, Ala., and Jonathon Riley of Kearney, Mo.; three sisters, Bernice Broom, Lois Bullock, and Margie McVay, all of Columbia. Hathorn Funeral Home, Columbia, was in charge of the arrangements.

COLLEGE AND SEMINARY NEWS

1. Southern Seminary held its 202nd graduation commencement Dec. 12. Graduates with Mississippi connections include Jonathan W. Berry, Crystal Springs, Master of Divinity; Micah D. Carter, Blue Mountain College, Ph.D.; Kevin R. Cuthbertson, Holly Springs, Master of Divinity; and James G. Hurt, Hernando, Master of Divinity.

2. Thirty Blue Mountain College students and six faculty members comprise the charter class of the Alpha Delta Psi Chapter of the Kappa Delta Pi international honor society for education majors. The 36 charter members of the BMC Kappa Delta Pi education honor society:

STUDENTS — Heather Bagwell, Pontotoc; Angela Birmingham, Olive Branch; Angela Brown, New Albany; Cindy Calvert, Pontotoc; Rita Carter, Ripley; Scott Cockrell, Pontotoc; Sandy Dill, Luka; Laura Fennell, New Albany;

Dawn Geno, Luka; Bre Atna Heart, Myrtle; Tracy Holland, Vina, Ala.; Julie Holmes, Byhalia; Shonda Kiddy, Hickory Flat; Ben Knight, Tipplersville; Berry Lambert, Rienzi; Rachel Lindsey, Pontotoc; Barry Mathews, Algoma; Julia Mattox, Corinth; Denise McAnally, Booneville;

Emily Newell, Pontotoc; Ashley Reeder, Thaxton; Brandon Smith, Corinth; Jennifer Smith, Blue Mountain; Ronda Thompson, New Albany; Laura Vierheller, Hickory Flat; Suzanne Watkins, Potts Camp; Hunter Wilbanks, Corinth; Rebekah Wiseman, New Albany.

FACULTY — Johnnie Armstrong, Blue Mountain; Becky Emens, Saltillo; Kay Matkins, New Albany; Janice Nicholson, Blue Mountain; Beverly Moffitt, Ripley; Rheta Ann West, New Albany.



2. Kappa Delta Phi, Blue Mountain

Report shows homeschooling numbers exploding

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A new report by the U.S. Department of Education finds that the number of homeschooled children in America has risen steadily over the past five years and stood at about 1.5 million in 2007.

Homeschooling experts, though, place the number closer to two million and say the discrepancy can be attributed to homeschooling parents being less inclined to respond to government surveys.

The report from the National Center for Education Statistics, a division of the federal government's education department, said in December the number of homeschooled children was up 74% from 1999 to 2007 and 36% since 2003.

Among the top reasons parents gave for choosing homeschooling over traditional education: concern about the school environment, to provide religious or moral instruction, and dissatisfaction with the academic instruction available at other schools.

"From 2003 to 2007, the percentage of students whose parents reported homeschooling to provide religious or moral instruction increased from 72% to 83%," the report said.

Months earlier, Brian Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute, released a factsheet saying parent-led, home-based education a decade ago appeared to be cutting edge and alternative but now is bordering on mainstream in the United States.

Ray said in July there were an estimated two million to 2.5 million children in grades K-12 who were home educated during 2007-08. He also said the method was growing quickly in popularity among minorities, with about 15% of homeschooled families being non-Anglo.

In addition, Ray, author of Worldwide Guide to Homeschooling from B&H Publishing, noted that homeschooling relieves American taxpayers of more than \$16 billion that would have to be spent if homeschooled children attended public schools.

Most parents decide to homeschool for more than one reason, he said, and the top reasons include customizing the curriculum and learning environment for each child and accomplishing more

academically than in schools. Also on his list was the option to teach a particular set of values, beliefs and worldview.

Ray's fact sheet addressed the academic performance of homeschooled children and said they typically score 15 to 30 percentile points above public school students on standardized academic achievement tests. Homeschool students typically score above average on college admissions tests, he said, and increasingly they are being actively recruited by colleges.

"The home-educated are doing well, typically above average, on measures of social, emotional and psychological development," Ray said. "Research measures include peer interaction, self-concept, leadership skills, family cohesion, participation in community service, and self-esteem."

Zan Tyler, an acquisitions editor and speaker for Apologia Educational Ministries, a homeschool curriculum and publishing company, told Baptist Press an increase in homeschooling will have a "positive benefit on society."

"They're not burned out from education. [Homeschool students] have a real love for learning by and large, and they have an independence in their learning," said Tyler, a former homeschool resource and media consultant for B&H Publishing. "They sort of own their own education. I think that's important."

"More than that, as Christians, another interesting study Brian Ray did was I think it was 94% of homeschooled said they agreed that the religious beliefs of their parents are also their own religious beliefs," she said. "And this is at a time when we statistically see the 18-29-year-olds leaving the church in record numbers..."

"I would say the greatest benefit of homeschooling is just that these kids are being raised in Christian homes and there's just something in the discipleship model there that obviously is a blessing of the Lord," Tyler added. "These kids are maintaining their faith as they get older in record numbers compared to other kids."

Tyler agreed with Ray's assessment that the number of homeschooled chil-

dren in the United States probably is much higher than the Department of Education study found, and she said it has been her experience that "a lot of times homeschooled just aren't going to respond to government surveys."

In 1984, Tyler and her husband Joe started homeschooling their children in South Carolina, and the state superintendent of education threatened her with jail for not sending her children to a traditional school. Through eight years in court, the Tylers advanced the cause of homeschooling in their state. In 1990, the Tylers founded the South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools and through the state legislature won a statute giving SCAHS the same power to approve homeschooling programs as local school boards.

Tyler said she wasn't sure whether the dramatic increase in the number of homeschooled children would tempt the federal or local government to intervene in the future.

"I don't know how much the increased numbers have to do with it as much as the fact that government always seeks to control or intervene," she said. "We saw that in the California decision where an appellate court there sought to make homeschooling illegal."

After she left B&H and before she accepted her current position at Apologia, Tyler served as the national grassroots director for the Parental Rights Amendment, a campaign seeking an amendment to the U.S. Constitution protecting the rights of parents to raise their children.

"With Obama being elected and Hillary Clinton his new secretary of state, she's a big proponent of the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and that will not bode well for homeschoolers," Tyler told BP. "When an international treaty is ratified, it supersedes all domestic law except for the Constitution. That's why we've been seeking a constitutional amendment that would guarantee parental rights in a wide variety of things including educational choice — how parents educate their children."

According to parentalrights.org, "Under the UNCRC, instead of following due process, government agencies would have the power to override your parental choices at their whim because they determine what is in the best interest of the child." In essence, the UNCRC applies the legal status of abusive parents to all parents. This means that the burden of proof falls on the parent to prove to the state that they are good parents — when it should fall upon the state to prove that their investigation is not without cause.

As for the future of homeschooling, Ty said she believes it will continue to be an appealing option for parents who want to raise their children "in the admonition and the fear of the Lord" and according to their learning styles.

"With the economy, it will be interesting to see what happens because more mothers are going back to work. But also as more people work at home, then they're able to blend home education with working at home and all of life."

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January Bible Study features Joe McKeever cartoon aids

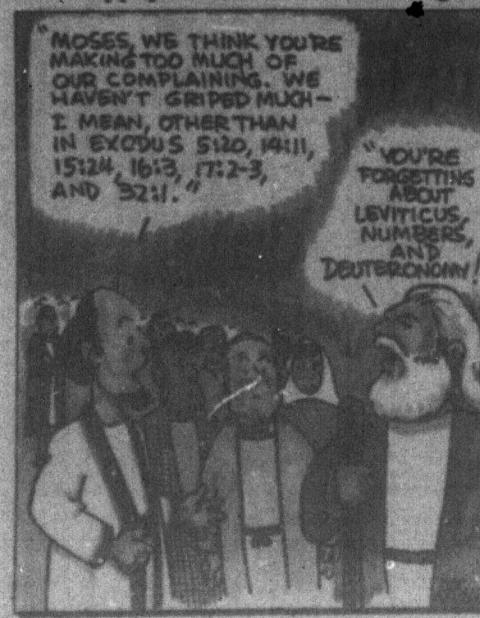
NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — Each year, Baptist Press cartoonist and former Mississippi pastor Joe McKeever,

missions director for New Orleans Association in Louisiana, creates a series of cartoons dealing with the theme for the

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual January Bible Study. This month, churches around the SBC will be studying

the book of Exodus. The cartoons, posted at <http://www.bpnnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=29633>, are free and

downloadable. Churches and study groups are welcome to use them along with their other study materials.



Israeli military strike into Gaza claims Baptist church

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — An Israeli air strike at Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip seriously damaged Gaza Baptist Church on New Year's Day.

The Israeli offensive, launched Dec. 27 after a week in which more than 200 rockets struck southern Israel from the Gaza Strip, illustrates the failure of the "land for peace" strategy in the Middle East, say two Israeli commentators.

A leading Southern Baptist observer called the situation a "human tragedy" and "squandered opportunity."

Windows were blown out at Gaza Baptist Church when Israeli aircraft attacked a police station across the street, according to a report from the BosNews service. In 2007, the six-story church was commandeered by fighters with the Palestinian Fatah faction as a lookout station during the civil war in Gaza between Fatah and Hamas.

More specific information on the building and church members is not yet available. The church's pastor, Hanna Massad, was forced to flee Gaza after the Hamas takeover. Another Baptist leader in Gaza, bookstore owner Rami Ayyad, was kidnapped and murdered in October 2007.

Israel followed several days of aerial bombardment on Hamas targets with a ground invasion Jan. 2, cutting the Gaza Strip in half and digging in around Gaza City. The Israeli offensive has focused on gaining control of high-rise buildings outside Gaza City and destroying buildings that serve as Hamas command centers or weapons caches, according to news reports out of the region.

Israel also has attacked tunnels in southern Gaza used to smuggle weapons.

While Gaza health officials said the death toll of 537 included at least 200 civilians, Israeli officials have countered that civilian deaths are inevitable when Hamas military sites and operations are based in urban areas.

"If Hamas chose cynically to use those civilians as human shields, then Hamas should be accountable," Israeli military spokeswoman Avital Leibovich told the Associated Press. "Civilians will probably continue to get killed, unfortunately, because Hamas put them in the first lines of fire."

Middle East commentator Daniel Pipes said the "land for peace" concept that has driven Middle East peace proposals since 1993 is in jeopardy.

A Dec. 31 column at danielpipes.org quoted former Israeli general Yaakov Amidror as saying, "The historical lesson... proves that with every concession, every territory we leave is used for attacks against us."

Hamas rockets can now reach as many as one million Israelis and Israeli intelligence now believes Lebanon's Hezbollah militias have rockets that can strike Tel Aviv, Israel's largest city, Pipes said.

The Hamas fighters in Gaza, like the Hezbollah militias in Lebanon, are proxies of Iran's government which has declared its intention of destroying the state of Israel, said author David Dolan.

"Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, called upon Muslims everywhere to rise up and defend the Arab residents of Gaza 'in any way possible,'" Dolan wrote in a Dec. 29 column at ddolan.com. "Iranian volunteers are already being recruited to join the battle on the ground. This comes as several Islamic clerics around the world declared the situation a 'jihad' that obligates all Muslims to come to the aid of Hamas."



BLOWN AWAY — The outside wall of Gaza Baptist Church, shown here in 2002, was intact and marred only by graffiti. Now, according to news reports, the church has sustained major damage from an Israeli air strike on a nearby Palestinian police station on New Year's Eve. (BP file photo by Roy Burrows)

Dolan noted that, while Israel tries to avoid civilian casualties, Hamas deliberately targets civilians with its rocket attacks. Dolan quoted Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak telling an emergency session of the Israeli parliament that Israel was engaged in "all out war" with Hamas and its radical Islamic allies.

"I want to remind the world that Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip more than three years ago," Barak told the lawmakers. "We gave a chance for a new reality and all we've seen in return is the Hamas government firing rockets and missiles on our citizens and carrying out attacks against Israel."

"The situation in Gaza is a human tragedy," said Richard Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville. "Hamas could have used the opportunity provided by Israel's withdrawal in 2005 to begin to construct a real Palestinian

state by providing basic services to its people and building desperately needed roads and infrastructure. Instead, Hamas, a terrorist organization committed to the annihilation of the Israeli state, chose to squander that historic opportunity by committing the meager resources of the Palestinian people to turning the Gaza strip into a terrorist base and a launching pad for thousands of rockets aimed deliberately at the civilian population of southern Israel.

"Instead of attempting to protect and serve their civilian population, Hamas deliberately uses Palestinian civilians as shields in an attempt to deter Israeli military action against rocket factories and launching sites. One has to ask, what other country in the world would have waited as long as Israel has to respond in force to such murderous acts against its civilian population?"

"It may be that it is even more important for the Palestinians' future

than the Israelis' that Israel defeat Hamas, thus providing a more hopeful, peaceful and positive future for both Palestinians and Israelis. We should all pray that the 'peace of Jerusalem' should come sooner, rather than later to the Holy Land."

President-elect Barack H. Obama has yet to comment on the crisis, sticking to his previous statements that America has only one president at a time. An Obama aide told Reuters Jan. 4, "During this transition period, we are not engaging in any action that could send confusing signals to the world about who speaks on behalf of the United States."

During the Democratic primary and the general election campaign, Obama and former Democrat presidential Hillary Rodham Clinton — now Obama's secretary of state-designate — made multiple comments that were viewed mostly as pro-Israel.

Gaza pastor: no injuries to Christians thus far

RICHMOND, Va. (BP and local reports) — No Christians in Gaza have been injured despite living in hard-hit areas, a Baptist pastor there reported to Baptist Press late in the afternoon Jan. 6.

News staff at Christianity Today, meanwhile, were reporting three Christians have died since the hostilities began in Gaza Dec. 27 but Baptist Press has not yet independently confirmed the circumstances of those deaths.

One death was attributed to a heart attack but no supporting information was provided about the deaths of the other two individuals named.

Israel sent military forces into Gaza after more than 2,000 rockets slammed into Israeli territory from Gaza over the past several years. Israel had previously removed settlements from Gaza and turned the area over to the Palestinians under a "land for peace" agreement.

Lack of food, water, and electricity is a current major concern for the population, the Baptist pastor said. The pastor (name withheld for security reasons) asked that Southern Baptists pray for a quick and peaceful resolution of the strife between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas faction. Israel tentatively welcomed a proposal Jan. 7

from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and French President Nicolas Sarkozy calling for a Gaza cease-fire to allow aid to reach Palestinian civilians, the Associated Press reported. The temporary cease-fire took place in the "whole of the Gaza Strip" Jan. 7, Israeli Defense Ministry spokesman Peter Lerner told CNN.

The truce is scheduled to take place every other day for a three-hour time span until a permanent resolution is formed.

Israel said it will continue discussions with Egypt and France about how to achieve an extended cease-fire.

Analysis: Trust should be in the Lord, not finances

By O.S. Hawkins, president,
GuideStone Financial Resources

The headline called out from newspapers around the world — the ongoing credit crunch had claimed another victim. This time it was German businessman Adolf Merckle. A bespectacled and balding 74-year-old family businessman, Merckle lost hundreds of millions of euros last year in the financial markets, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Distraught over the difficulty in obtaining a 400-million euro loan from a consortium of German banks to help right his business interests, he chose to end his life along a rail line near Blaubeuren-Weiler, Germany.

News articles noted this was far from the first suicide tied to the current economic crisis. A

French financier who lost a reported \$1.5 billion on behalf of his clients in a suspected Ponzi scheme involving Bernard L. Madoff, was found dead in his Manhattan office before Christmas.

From my years as a pastor, I can testify that comforting a grieving family is always a challenge, but when the family is grieving over a suicide, it can be even more difficult to find the words to console. However, one truth can always be agreed upon: Whatever reason someone thinks warrants suicide, it's too high a price to pay.

For that reason, allow me to remind us all that in God's economy we are worth far more than what shows up in our bank account or financial statement. How valuable are we? We are so valuable to God that we were

ransomed (Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45) with the blood of Christ. God thought us so important that He sent His Son as a ransom for many. That makes our wealth and account balances — whatever their size — pale in comparison.

These are tough times. In a recent message to our GuideStone trustees, we shared from Deuteronomy 11:11-12, which says, "But the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year."

Though we have walked through the valleys during the recent months with volatility in the financial markets, we have been through these experiences before.

The 90-year heritage of service by GuideStone Financial Resources means we've survived some valleys before — the Great Depression, world wars, terrorist attacks, and multiple recessions. It is during these valleys that we learn the real lessons of life. Ups and downs in the financial

markets are a reality. Whether we are in an up cycle or down cycle, we must remember that God is our resource. His eyes are always on us.

During these tough economic times, GuideStone has prepared an online resource to answer participants' questions and concerns. Whether you're a GuideStone participant or not, we invite you to visit our website at www.GuideStone.org/marketwatch to read our articles and watch the helpful videos.

During these challenging circumstances, we would do well to remember some basic tips:

- Maintain your investment discipline.
- Prepare for emergencies. Diversify so your investments are appropriately allocated.
- Remain rational.
- Perhaps most important, don't neglect your tithes and offerings. In uncertain times, nothing makes us more content than giving.

We know times are tough and economic indicators don't point to a quick resolution to

this recession — already the longest in a generation. Layoffs are mounting and people with once-secure careers are finding themselves out of work, sometimes for months on end.

If your trust is in a new president, or a new Federal Reserve policy, or new congressional action, you will surely be disappointed. If your trust is in the Lord, you never will be disappointed.

The challenges we are facing globally may not subside soon. This may be a longer valley than we've experienced in our lifetimes, but we know who holds the future and we must trust Him to provide for us yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Our God is the Sovereign Lord whether we are in a recession or in a rebound. As we lead in our respective places of service, may we encourage one another to see God's guiding hand "through it all."

He has not abdicated His throne and we, here at GuideStone, are committed to serving you in any and every way possible in these days.

Hawkins

JUST FOR THE RECORD

1. The youth of Corinth Church, Tallahatchie County, presented its annual Christmas musical Dec. 21, with a crowd of 90 attending.
2. County Line Church, Walnut, will be having their annual Jubilee Camp Meeting Feb. 5 - 7. Eddie Bumper, speaker. For information, call (662) 223-4715.
3. First Church, Holly Springs, is hosting a Women's Mini conference Jan. 31, 8:30 a.m. - noon, featuring Rita Sweat.
4. The Bailey Smith Real Evangelism Conference will be held at Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, Jan. 28 - 30. Guest speakers include: Jerry Vines, Bob Pitman, Ergun Caner, Rick Coram & Junior Hill. Musical guests include: Mike Speck Trio, the McKameys, Greater Vision & Triumphant Quartet. For more scheduling info see our web page: www.wheelergrovebaptist.com. The
5. Pinelake Church, Brandon, is offering a free Spirit Filled Counseling worship Jan. 9 - 10 dealing with family or marital relationship problems, blended family issues, guilt, shame, fear, anxiety, low self-esteem issues, co-dependency, chemical dependency issues, bonding, boundaries, and other issues. Times are Fri., 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.; Sat., 9 - 11 a.m., followed by lunch, and noon - 2 p.m. To register, email Marti.Wall@pinelake.org or call (601) 829-4551.
6. Harrisville Church, Harrisville, will host Brian Free and Assurance in concert Jan. 18, 5:30 p.m. A love offering will be received.
7. Bunker Hill Church, Columbia, will have January Bible Study Jan. 18 - 21; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Bryant Barnes, study leader.

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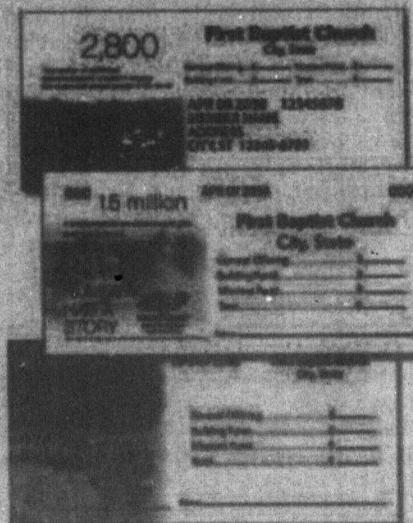
LOCAL TRAVEL SHOWS

Thursday Jan 22	Laura	11:30 am
Friday Jan 23	Meridian	6:00 pm
Monday Jan 26	Louisville	11:30 am
Tuesday Jan 27	Grenada	6:00 pm
Wednesday Jan 28	Hattiesburg	11:30 am
Thursday Jan 29	D'Iberville	6:00 pm
	McComb	11:30 am
	Brookhaven	6:00 pm
	Natchez	11:30 am
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If we don't tell the story of the Cooperative Program, who will?

Together with the Executive Committee of the SBC and the Stewardship Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, we've launched a new offering envelope series entitled Every Number Has a Story™. Every week the people in your pews will learn how the Cooperative Program (CP) supports and provides Southern Baptists with Kingdom building ministry opportunities. Please consider helping us recast the vision and purpose of CP by choosing this exclusive offering envelope series for your church.



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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Show Fresh Respect

(Sanctity of Human Life Lesson)

Genesis 4:1-16, 25-26

By Bill Patterson

A recent news release told of an appalling number of homicides in major cities in America last year. Why are we not surprised? Nearly two generations have now been raised since *Roe v. Wade* made abortion legal. If it is okay to stop the life of the unborn, it is not much of a leap in thinking to allow for taking the life of the already born.

But it is not okay in God's eyes to take a life—born or unborn. God would have us respect one another, to do those things that raise compassion for one another, to treat one another in life-affirming ways, and to work for laws that value life. The story of Cain and Abel reminds us that all human life matters to God.

Recognize Life is a Gift (Gen. 4:1-2)

Although God forced a "relocation" for Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden due to their sin, yet He did not abandon them. He gave them a baby boy. Eve declared the birth was not merely the result of a biological function, but came "by the help of the Lord" (Gen. 4:1). Soon a second baby boy came along and sibling rivalry entered the world!

Eve's statement, "I have had a male child by the help of the Lord," reminds us of the sacredness of life. Like Eve, almost every new parent will testify that their baby is a "miracle." There is no getting around it—life is from God.

Beware of Self-Centeredness (Gen. 4:3-8)

The Bible does not tell us

why Abel's offering was accepted but not Cain's. It could have been because Abel's sacrifice of a living animal foreshadowed the blood sacrifices for sin in the Old Testament and the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (Jesus) in the New. Was it that Abel's offering of the

"first fruits" indicated a true sacrifice on his part while Cain's offering was from his left-overs and not worthy of the Lord? We do not know.

We do know God's confrontation indicated Cain's anger was out of control. Rage, wrath, and uncontrollable anger are serious problems. If unchecked they lead to spouse abuse, child abuse, the breakup of homes, and to children who grow up hurt. Since hurt people hurt people, rage has a way of creating problems that last for generations. It all stems from selfish hearts that are unwilling to follow God's advice.

God told Cain his sacrifice would be accepted if he did

well. On the other hand, God gave Cain a descriptive word-picture of sin crouching at the door if he did wrong.

Accept Accountability for One Another (Gen. 4:9-12)

God asked Adam, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9) when he and Eve sinned and hid from God. After Cain killed his brother, God asked him, "Where is your brother?" The first question gets to the heart of our relationship with God and the second to our relationship with others. God later gave Moses Ten Commandments that dealt with our relationship with God (first four) and our relationship with others (last six.)

Abel's blood called from the ground with a voice audible to God. Can you hear the voices of millions of unborn children whose lives have been taken? Or the voices of the devalued in our land? God's words to Cain indicate we have accountability for others.

Some of the ways we can demonstrate our responsibility to others is to repent of prejudice, to pray for and assist those

in danger of abuse, and work with other Christian groups for the elimination of abortion.

Turn to the Lord (Gen. 4:13-16, 25-26)

Cain never asked God for forgiveness. He had no sense of remorse. His concern was for his own safety.

God's sentence on Cain, to live a life of a wanderer away from other people, was a fitting punishment for one who had no respect for human life. Even with the judgment, however, God was merciful to Cain by limiting his punishment and offering him protection from others.

Have you devalued or disrespected others? Each of us has at one point or another. Why not ask the Lord to show you a specific time you have wronged another and then ask His forgiveness? The story of Cain and Abel shows that turning to the Lord also involves living in ways that respect and elevate the lives of others.

Patterson is pastor of First Church, Richland.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Whose Life is Important?

Exodus 20:13; 21:22-25; 22:21-24;
Deut. 24:17-22; Matt. 5:21-26; Luke 20:47

By Joyce C. Rogers

This Sunday is the annual Sanctity of Human Life emphasis. All human life is created by God and therefore has worth and dignity.

In 1973 the U. S. Supreme Court made abortion legal. For those of us who believe that life begins at conception, abortion is morally wrong, despite the fact that it is legal.

Psalm 139:13, 14 (HCSB) says it beautifully. "For it was You who created my inward parts. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise You, because I have been remarkably and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and I know this very well."

There are other aspects of the Sanctity of Human Life matter. Mercy killing, the use of aborted babies' body parts for research, the protection of pregnant

women, the care of widows and orphans are related topics.

Protect All Human Life as Valuable

"Do not murder" is how the sixth commandment is expressed in the Holman Christian Standard Bible and the New International Version. Most would agree that this is a more accurate translation than "Thou shalt not kill." We "kill" animals for food and there is no biblical prohibition. To the contrary, Peter was told to "kill and eat!" (Acts 10:12, 13, HCSB).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave a broader meaning to "Do not murder." He said that whoever had angry words for his brother is subject to judgment. We are not to insult or belittle others. Malice, hatred, and ill will toward our brother make our worship unacceptable.

Jesus said that the hostile



Rogers

thoughts and motives leading to murder are wrong. Our courts today recognize the difference between pre-meditated murder and an accidental death.

In the KJV, Matt. 5:22a reads "That whosoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the Council." According to The Teacher's Bible Commentary by H. Franklin Paschall and Herschel H. Hobbs, "Raca" is the sound made when clearing the throat to spit on someone!

Protect Pregnant Women and Unborn Children

Protection of pregnant women is advocated in Exodus 21:22-25. It is not the prerogative of individuals to return "eye for eye" and "tooth for tooth," but is meant to guide the judicial to give appropriate punishment.

Several years ago I volunteered for a year at a Crisis Pregnancy Center. I'll never forget my experiences there. I

remember counseling a high school girl. When I read Scriptures to her about moral purity, she said no one had ever told her about that. She did attend church regularly. Parents and churches both have a responsibility to teach our young people standards of behavior and the sacredness of marriage and human life.

In front of our state Baptist Building is a memorial to the unborn victims of abortion. Each penny in a huge container represents a baby lost. The goal of 50 million pennies has been reached, although pennies will still be accepted. The money will go to a Foundation and will assist Crisis Pregnancy Centers.

I have noticed in recent murders of pregnant women that double charges of murder have been made against suspects. If unborn children can be murdered, doesn't that affirm that the unborn child is a human being and not just a fetus or mass of tissue?

Protect Other Vulnerable People

Foreign residents, widows and orphans are not to be mis-

treated. The disabled and elderly may also be vulnerable.

In James 1:27 (HCSB), it is stated that "True and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world."

There are many good organizations to help the poor and disadvantaged. It is our duty and privilege to help these organizations when we can. Our own International Mission Board channels funds for World Hunger and Relief in an efficient way.

Ruth and Naomi, both widows, received kind treatment from Boaz. Boaz was blessed for his kindness.

Jesus told the disciples to "beware of the Scribes" who loved to be honored, but devoured widows' houses (Luke 20:45-47). They "talked the talk" but didn't "walk the walk." May we protect and care for human life however we can.

Rogers is a member of Main Street Church, Hattiesburg.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

THE BAPTIST RECORD

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital prints are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Survey: Pastors need to better relate to current crisis

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — While nearly two-thirds of Southern Baptist pastors have preached on stewardship in the past year, a new study shows that some of those pastors may have a disconnect with the financial struggles of America's families.

The survey of 3,500 Southern Baptist senior pastors was conducted by LifeWay Research on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention between November 2007-February 2008. The study revealed that 65% of pastors had preached on financial stewardship during the previous year but only 25% said their church members have "a significant amount of personal debt."

That stands in stark contrast to national statistics about the debt load American families are carrying, said Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research.

"In 2006, household debt in America grew by \$1.2 trillion — a one-year increase larger than the total amount of household debt just 30 years ago," said McConnell.

The average American is struggling with oppressive debt; they are spending \$1.26 for every dollar earned," said Bob Rodgers, vice president for Cooperative Program and Stewardship with the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Church members tend to look within their own congregation for guidance on promoting and teaching stewardship, according to the survey. Nearly three-fourths of the pastors surveyed (74%) said the congregation looks to them for guidance and 31% said their church turns to members of their church.

Only two percent said church members look to an independent stewardship consultant and nine percent look to a preferred author, while less than one in four look to their associational or state convention leadership.

The SBC Executive Committee is trying to address this disconnect between pastoral perspective and church member reality with the It's A New Day financial management

SBC pastors describe their congregation Members of our congregation as a whole...

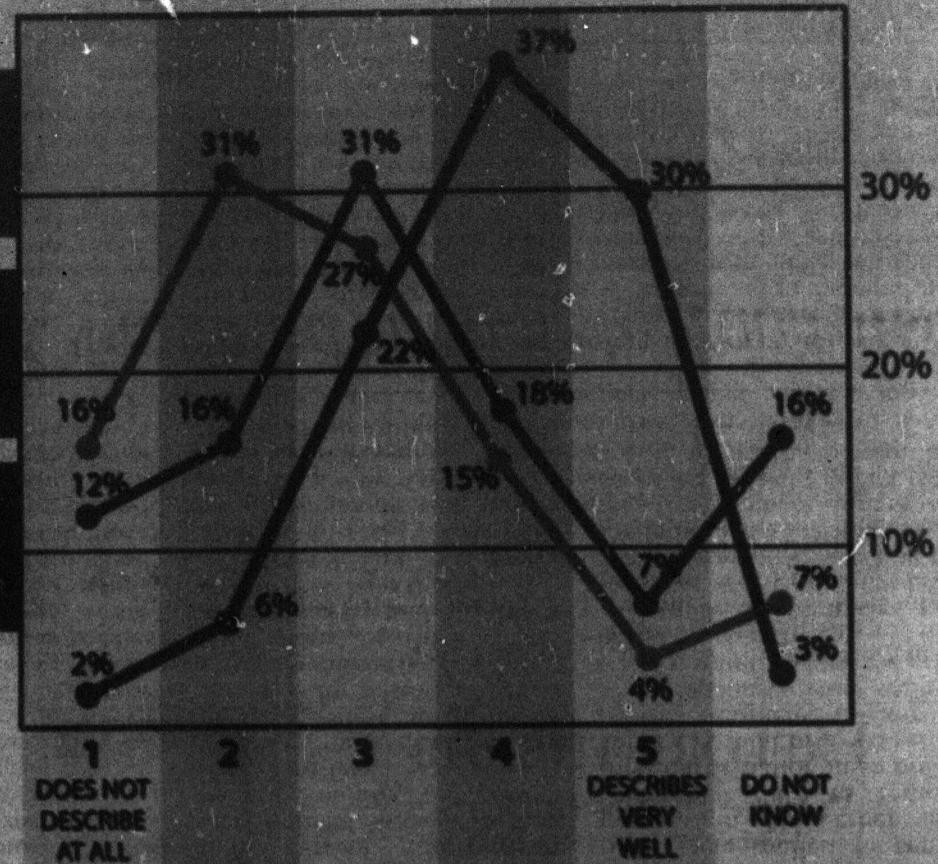
I look to the church for guidance in improving their financial management skills

...have a significant amount of personal debt

Take open to teaching or preaching on the subject of stewardship

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workshops, not a typical stewardship "program" but rather a "how-to" workshop designed to help pastors and churches learn strategic skills to manage their money more effectively, won their way out of financial bondage, and achieve a sense of spiritual well-being about the financial side of their lives.

Church members appear to be open to teaching or preaching on the subject of stewardship. A full 67% of the pastors describe their congregation as open on the subject and another 22% did not see church members as closed to the matter. Only eight percent thought their members were closed to learning more about principles of biblical stewardship and three percent "don't know."

Besides preaching on the subject, congregations had used

other activities in the last year to promote stewardship, the pastors said. An emphasis on planned giving or estate planning had been conducted by 48%; 32% had faithful or sacrificial givers share testimonies; 24% had offered Sunday School lessons; 20% had used a bulletin insert; and 18% had conducted a Stewardship Sunday emphasis.

Six percent of churches had offered a small group study on financial stewardship, money management, or debt reduction. Only 15% of the pastors said their congregations had not conducted any type of stewardship emphasis in the preceding 12 months.

The study concluded that 40 percent of the congregations had used resources offered by leading stewardship resource providers in the previous year.

Churches that had used such materials were divided, in descending order: 14%, Crown Financial Ministries; 13%, Dave Ramsey; nine percent, Larry Burkett; six percent, Empowering Kingdom Growth; five percent, Stewardship Development Association; three percent, Ron Blue; two percent, It's A New Day.

According to Rodgers, one of the greatest needs of the church is for pastors to have a greater awareness of the debt load many of their church members carry and to provide resources to help them.

"When God's people understand and practice biblical principles of money management and debt reduction, it not only increases their joy in the Christian life," Rodgers

said, "it also strengthens the church financially and enables it to minister more effectively in its community."

The survey was based on a census of all Southern Baptist congregations. Two invitations were mailed to senior pastors in November and December 2007 to request their participation in an online survey. A total of 3,500 senior pastors completed the survey. Their responses were weighted to minimize response error based on church size.

Because the sample of pastors was a census, there is no sampling error in selecting the invitation list. Questions asked on a five-point scale are reported based on the top box (four and five) or the bottom box (one and two) response.

Evangelical radio network puts Obama ad money to good use

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Under FCC law the Bott Radio Network, an evangelical chain of stations covering 14 states, was required to run political advertisements paid for by Barack Obama's presidential campaign.

The radio network, though, didn't have to pocket the money, so in the weeks following Obama's election Bott Radio Network distributed all of the revenue from the Obama advertisements — about \$4,000 — to crisis pregnancy centers in Missouri and Indiana, the two battleground states which Obama's campaign targeted with the advertisements.

"We tried to find a way to take lemons and make lemonade," Rich Bott, executive vice president of the network, told Baptist Press.

The network's listeners, many if not most of whom are social conservatives, likely were surprised in October when Bott Radio Network began airing ads asserting that Obama shared the values of the listeners.

After all, some of the network's programs, such as Focus on the Family, Richard Land Live, and Jay Sekulow Live take positions that Obama opposes.

"I found [Obama's ad] particularly disingenuous, knowing that he had pledged to Planned Parenthood to support the Freedom of Choice Act," Bott said, referencing a bill that would overturn pro-life laws nationwide and guarantee that abortion remains legal.

"You can't share our values and be in favor of killing innocent unborn children. We felt we had an obligation to clarify our position to our listeners. We aired editorials at the same time his advertisement was running explaining to our listeners that we were required to air those ads and

that we objected to his position on life and gay marriage... And, we pledged to our listeners that we would donate the revenue from those announcements to pro-life crisis pregnancy centers."

It's not the first time Bott Radio Network has faced a similar dilemma. In 1996, President Clinton, running for re-election, ran ads on the network which responded — as it did this year — by running editorials explaining the situation and donating the revenue to pro-life organizations.

Obama, who opted out of public financing for the gen-

eral election, shattered previous campaign fundraising records by raising more than \$700 million in the primary and general election seasons. In the final months, his campaign had so much money that it was even purchasing ads for online sports video games, such as Xbox 360's Madden NFL 09, encouraging gamers to go vote early.

Some no doubt will find it ironic that, in a roundabout way, Obama's campaign helped fund crisis pregnancy centers.

"We spread his wealth around," Bott said.